

Message Text

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ACTION IO-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9083

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 10058

LIMDIS

NESCO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCON, PFOR, UNESCO
SUBJECT: UNESCO: DYNAMICS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
MEETING TO DRAFT A DECLARATION ON RACE AND
RACE PREJUDICE, PARIS, MARCH 13-20, 1978

REF: STATE 075071

1. BEGIN SUMMARY
DECLARATION, WHICH IS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST TO THE
AFRICANS, WHO VALUE IT FOR ITS POTENTIAL AS A PR
WEAPON AGAINST APARTHEID, WAS ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS WITH
THE SUPPORT OF ISRAEL, THE UNITED STATES, AND ALL OTHER
MEMBER STATES ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE. THE AFRICANS
WERE WELL ORGANIZED, CLEARLY FOCUSED, TOUGH, AND, AS
IT TURNED OUT, IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT AT ALL TIMES. THE
MOST IMPORTANT US OBJECTIVE, AND THE ONLY ONE ON WHICH
WE HAD RECEIVED A FIRM, CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD COMMITMENT
FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WAS ACHIEVED: THE FINAL
TEXT OF THE DRAFT DECLARATION CONTAINED NO RPT NO
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DIRECT OR INDIRECT REFERENCE TO 3379. WE DID NOT
ACHIEVE ALL OF OUR OTHER OBJECTIVES (E.G., DESIGNATION
OF APARTHEID AS A CRIME STAYED IN, AND AN UNACCEPTABLE
REFERENCE TO THE NIEO WAS INCORPORATED) BUT WE
WILL GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO WORK FOR CHANGES WHEN THE
DRAFT DECLARATION COMES BEFORE THE NOVEMBER GENERAL
CONFERENCE FOR FINAL DEBATE AND ACTION. END SUMMARY

2. OUR SUPPORT ON CONTENTIOUS MATTERS RELATING TO ISRAEL HAS BEEN GRADUALLY UNDERGOING EROSION IN UNESCO, AND DROPPED EVEN FURTHER DURING FINAL DAYS OF THIS CONFERENCE. EVEN THE NETHERLANDS, HITHERTO ONE OF THE SOLIDIST OF ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS, WAS PREPARED TO GO THE WRONG WAY ON 3379 AT THIS CONFERENCE. WHEN HUMMEL, CHAIRMAN OF THE INFORMATION GROUP (IG) ASKED ON MORNING OF LAST DAY WHO WOULD WALK OUT IN EVENT THAT AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO 3379 WAS ADOPTED BY SEPARATE LINE ITEM VOTE, ONLY USDEL RAISED ITS HAND. IN EXPLANATION OF VOTE AT END OF CONFERENCE, AUSTRALIA AND CANADA SAID THEY COULD NOT HAVE SUPPORTED THE CONSENSUS HAD 3379 BEEN REFERRED TO. APPARENTLY, THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE IG WOULD HAVE PARTICIPATED IN CONSENSUS SUPPORT OF A DRAFT THAT HAD INDIRECT REFERENCE TO 3379. THIS LAST MINUTE CHANGE OF IG MEMBERS POSITIONS CAME AS A SHOCK TO US, AS WE HAD BELIEVED THAT THERE WOULD BE OTHERS JOINING IN A WALKOUT, AND STILL MORE WOULD HAVE WITHHELD SUPPORT OF CONSENSUS. IN SHORT, WE WON ON 3379 NOT BECAUSE OF SOLID WESTERN GROUP SUPPORT, BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF IT.

3. CURIOUSLY, WHEREAS USDEL TOWARDS END OF CONFERENCE BEGAN TO DOUBT THAT 3379 COULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED IN A VOTE (WE WERE EARLY ON TOLD SOCIALIST COUNTRIES WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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ABSTAIN, BUT ON MONDAY, MARCH 20 WERE TOLD THEY WOULD VOTE NO ON DROPPING REFERENCE TO 3379), THE ARABS WERE SEIZED WITH DOUBTS THAT DIRECT OR INDIRECT REFERENCE TO 3379 WOULD CARRY. FACT IS THAT -- EXCEPT FOR AFRICANS -- POSITIONS WERE SHIFTING SO RAPIDLY ON LAST DAY THAT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF PREDICTING HOW A VOTE WOULD HAVE GONE. THIS WAS ONE INSTANCE IN WHICH ARABS AND AMERICANS WERE IN AGREEMENT: WE WERE BOTH GLAD TO AVOID A VOTE.

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4. THIS WAS AFRICA'S CONFERENCE. THE AFRICANS ENFORCED COMPLETE AND EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE WITHIN THEIR GROUP, AND NO AFRICAN DELS GOT OUT OF LINE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY WERE BRUTAL WITH THE ARABS IN TELLING THEM NOT TO PUSH ON 3379. THE AFRICANS WANTED A DRAFT DECLARATION THAT REFERRED TO APARTHEID, AND THEY WANTED A DRAFT DECLARATION THAT WAS SUPPORTED BY EVERYBODY. AS IN ANY POLITICAL DEAL, ALL SIDES, INCLUDING THE AFRICANS, HAD TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. FOR THE AFRICANS, THIS MEANT GETTING A CONSENSUS THAT IN EFFECT READ: "VARIOUS AMONG US HAVE PROBLEMS WITH PARTS OF THIS DRAFT, BUT WE ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE DRAFT FORMS A SUITABLE BASIS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION NEXT NOVEMBER. SEE YOU ALL THEN FOR THE NEXT ROUND." THE AFRICANS WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A CONSENSUS THAT WAS NOT FLAWED BY THE NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS THIS ONE HAS, BUT THEY DID GET UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF SOME NINETY EIGHT MAJOR AND MINOR POWERS FOR THE DOCUMENT TAHT WAS ADOPTED.

5. THE AFRICANS HAVE THE BEST MACHINE IN UNESCO, AND
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WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH IT IN NOVEMBER.
OUR VIEWS ON BEST WAY OF DOING THIS WILL BE TRANSMITTED
SEPARATELY.

6. AGIOBU-KEMMER, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER AND CHIEF OF THE NIGERIAN DELEGATION TO THIS CONFERENCE, WAS THE FLOOR MANAGER FOR THE AFRICAN GROUP. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS CRITICISM OF HIS PERFORMANCE -- THAT HE IS SHALLOW, INEPT, INFLEXIBLE, ETC. -- HE GOT WHAT HIS GROUP WANTED. HE MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING RIGHT. WE

AGREE THAT HE CAN BE WINDY AND EMOTIONAL ON THE FLOOR OF THE PLENARY, BUT SOURCES WITHIN COMMITTEES TOLD US THAT IN THAT CONTEXT HE WAS EFFECTIVE, TO THE POINT, DECISIVE, AND CAME UP WITH GOOD LANGUAGE CHANGES. HIS NEGOTIATING SKILL MAY BE FURTHER INDICATED THAT WHILE HAVING TO GET A DRAFT DECLARATION THAT HAD UNANIMOUS SUPPORT, HE ALSO HAD TO SKIRT THE SCYLLA OF A US, ENTIRELY CREDIBLE, THREAT TO WALK OUT IF 3379 WERE MENTIONED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY IN THE DRAFT, AND THE CHARYBDIS OF THE ARAB THREAT TO WALK OUT IF THERE WERE NO MENTION, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, OF 3379 AT ALL. EVEN WITH THE POWERFUL MACHINE THAT HE HAD AT HIS DISPOSAL, IT WAS NO EASY JOB TO GET PAST THESE HAZARDS.

7. IN A COMPLETE ROLL REVERSAL, THE ARABS WERE RESTRAINED AND ALMOST MODERATE. THIS MAY REFLECT IN PART THEIR BELIEF THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE THE VOTES, AND PART THEIR UNWILLINGNESS TO TAKE ON THE AFRICANS ON A MATTER THAT AROUSED AFRICAN POLITICAL EMOTIONS AS THIS ISSUE DID. THE ARABS WERE BEING POLITICAL REALISTS IN THIS INSTANCE. WE WILL KEEP LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF ANY AFRO-ARAB DEAL THAT MIGHT PROVE AWKWARD TO US IN NOVEMBER, BUT THUS FAR THE ONLY DEAL APPEARS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO HAVE BEEN THE AGREEMENT DESCRIBED IN FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH.

8. ALTHOUGH THIS CONFERENCE WILL SEND ITS OWN REPORT TO THE NOVEMBER GENERAL CONFERENCE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ESTABLISHED UNESCO PROCEDURE, THE CONFERENCE ALSO MANDATED THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO MAKE A SEPARATE REPORT AND TO NOTE IN THAT REPORT THE AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT. THESE AREAS WILL INCLUDE 3379. IN ANY EVENT, AN HONEST SUMMARY REPORT OF THE DEBATE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THERE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO INSERT 3379, SINCE AUSTRALIANS IN FORMAL EXPLANATION OF VOTE SAID THAT HAD THERE BEEN A REFERENCE TO 3379 THEY COULD NOT HAVE SUPPORTED THE DRAFT DECLARATION, AND THE CANADIANS IMMEDIATELY ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH AUSTRALIAN LANGUAGE. THEY ASKED THAT THEIR VIEWS BE MADE MATTER OF RECORD. USDEL MADE STATEMENT ALONG LINES OF TEXT PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT STATING ITS OPPOSITION TO ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT MENTION OF 3379, BUT EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR CONSENSUS BECAUSE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN DRAFT DECLARATION.

9. USDEL WAS IN CLOSE AND CONSTANT TOUCH WITH ISRAELIS, AGIOBU-KEMMER, IG MEMBERS, THE RAPPORTEUR OF THE

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CONFERENCE (BJORNEBY OF NORWAY), AND HAD FREQUENT CON-
TACT WITH THE DG, AND KARL VASAK.

10. KARL VASAK, DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS AND PEACE, WAS APPOINTED CONFERENCE SECRETARY.
AS SUCH, IT WAS HIS JOB TO COACH THE PRESIDENT (THE
GHANAIAAN PERMREP AMBASSADOR TURKSON) ON PARLIAMENTARY
TACTICS AND GUIDE HIM THROUGH THE ROUGH AND TUMBLE IN
AN ORDERLY MANNER. VASAK WAS GIVEN LOW MARKS BY SOME
OBSERVERS ON HIS CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT, HOWEVER HIGHLY
HE MAY BE HELD IN ESTEEM FOR HIS INTELLECTUAL MASTERY
OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. THE CONFERENCE IN GENERAL
STRUCK MANY PARTICIPANTS AS BEING BELOW CUSTOMARY UNES-
CO STANDARDS FOR MANAGEMENT.

11. FIRST THREE DAYS OF CONFERENCE MOVED SLOWLY, AND WE
DID NOT GET DOWN TO SUBSTANTIVE DEBATE UNTIL WEDNESDAY
P.M. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN BLESSING IN DISGUISE, AS IT
GAVE US THREE DAYS WITH NO POSSIBLE MENTION OF 3379.
DECISION WAS MADE TO DEBATE THE OPERATIVE ARTICLES
FIRST AND PREAMBLE AFTERWARDS. SINCE 3379 WAS TO HAVE
APPEARED IN THE PREAMBLE, THIS GAVE US A FURTHER SAFE
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PERIOD. AS DEBATE ON INDIVIDUAL ARTICLES AND PARAGRAPHS OF ARTICLES WAS CONCLUDED, THE PRESIDENT SUMMED UP THE TENOR AND EITHER DECIDED THAT THERE WAS CONSENSUS OR WAS NOT, IN WHICH LATTER CASE HE ASKED THE DNG TO WORK ON THE ISSUES. SOMETIMES THE DIRECTOR GENERAL MADE HIS OWN SUMMING UP, AND TURKSON DID NOT CONTEST ANY OF THE DG'S VIEWS.

12. THE DEVICE OF A DRAFTING AND NEGOTIATING GROUP (DNG) WHICH PROVED HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AT 19TH GENERAL CONFERENCE, WAS USED FOR THIS CONFERENCE. IT APPEARS THAT THE SECRETARIAT HAD A MUCH HEAVIER INFLUENCE THIS TIME THAN IT DID IN NAIROBI. WE MUST GIVE SERIOUS THOUGHT TO THE FORMULATION OF GUIDELINES FOR A POSSIBLE DNG AT THE 20TH GENERAL CONFERENCE, OR WE MAY FIND THE DNG HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO A RUBBER STAMP OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL. PERUVIAN PERMREP, WAGNER DE REYNA, CHAIRED MOST MEETINGS OF THE DNG, EVEN THOUGH PRESIDENT TURKSON WAS DESIGNATED AS CHAIRMAN TO START WITH. (TURKSON HAD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE BUREAU'S REDRAFTING OF THE PREAMBLE, AND THIS POSTED CONFLICT.) WAGNER DE REYNA GOT GOOD MARKS FROM U.S. MEMBER OF DNG FOR HAVING DONE THE BEST JOB POSSIBLE UNDER TRYING CONDITIONS. THE DNG WORKED BY CONSENSUS.

13. RE PARA 8 REFTTEL. ALTHOUGH WE EARLIER ATTRIBUTED TURKSON'S PARLIAMENTARY HANDLING THAT RESULTED IN LEAVING THE NUMBER OF VICE PRESIDENT'S AT FOUR INSTEAD IN INCREASING TO SIX AS BUMBLING ON HIS (OR VASAK'S) PART, ON REFLECTION WE CAN SEE A CASE FOR INTERPRETING HIS ACTION AS REFLECTING DELIBERATE SECRETARIAT CHANGE OF POSITION. CHRONOLOGY IS IMPORTANT IN THIS HYPOTHESIS. OUR DECISION TO PARTICIPATE WAS RECEIVED HERE AT ABOUT 5:00 PM LOCAL ON FRIDAY MARCH 17. AS FAR AS SECRETARIAT CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS CONCERNED, THEIR DEADLINE ON CERTAIN CONFERENCE-STRATEGY DECISIONS WAS FRIDAY MARCH 10. STEVE MARKS, WHO WAS HEAVILY ENGAGED IN TACTICAL PLANNING, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR TORRES AT 11:00 AM MARCH 10 TO ASK IF WE HAD A DECISION ON PARTICIPATION, AND WE DID NOT. HE OFFERED US AT THAT TIME A VICE PRESIDENCY, AND WE HAD TO TELL HIM THAT WE WERE NOT YET AUTHORIZED TO PARTICIPATE. THIS TOOK HIM BY SURPRISE. IT MAY WELL BE THAT THE DG DECIDED AT THAT TIME THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN GOING TO SIX VPS IF HE COULD NOT COUNT ON A BALANCED US-USSR SLATE FOR THE TWO ADDITIONAL OFFICES.

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14. BJORNEBY (NORWAY) THE WESTERN MEMBER OF THE BUREAU TOLD US LATER IT PROBABLY WORKED OUT FOR THE BEST THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT ON THE BUREAU. HIS IN HIS VIEW, HAD U.S. BEEN PRESENT, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN AN AUTOMATIC CONFRONTATION WITH THE IRAQI MEMBER OF THE BUREAU OVER 3379. IRAQIS HAD THREATENED, AT ABOUT THE TIME THE BUREAU WAS DELIBERATING THE PREAMBLE, TO WALK OUT OF THE CONFERENCE IF THEY DIDN'T GET AT LEAST AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO 3379 INTO THE DRAFT PREAMBLE THAT THE BUREAU SENT BACK TO PLENARY. THIS WOULD HAVE LEAD TO AN IMPASS IN THE BUREAU, WITH AT LEAST THE 3379 PARAGRAPH, AND PERHAPS THE ENTIRE PREAMBLE, BEING TOSSED BACK TO THE PLENARY FOR FULL DEBATE -- SOMETHING WE WANTED AT ALL COSTS TO AVOID. AS IT WAS, THE BUREAU, CONFIDENT THAT THE AFRICANS HAD THE STRENGTH IN PLENARY TO CONTROL MATTERS, JUDGED IT TACTICALLY SMARTER TO SEND THE 3379 PARA BACK TO PLENARY IN BRACKETS AND DEAL WITH IT THERE. HAD US BEEN MEMBER OF THE BUREAU, IT COULD NOT HAVE AGREED TO THIS. HOWEVER, AS IT WORKED OUT, AFRICAN STRENGTH ENABLED THE PLENARY TO DEAL WITH THE 3379 LANGUAGE BY DELETING IT ON THE

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PROCEDURAL GROUNDS THAT IT DID NOT HAVE CONSENSUS
SUPPORT, AND HAVE IT ACTED ON WITHOUT DEBATE.

15. RE PARA SIX REFTEL. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE,
AFRICAN'S COMMITMENT TO OPPOSE 3379 WAS BASED ENTIRELY
ON THEIR DESIRE TO GET US SUPPORT OF THE DRAFT
DECLARATION. WE DO NOT THINK THEY ARE SYMPATHETIC IN
PRINCIPLE TO OUR POSITION ON 3379: ON THE CONTRARY,
IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THEY REGARD IT AS NOT RELATING TO
THEIR OWN DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE INTERESTS. IN SHORT,
THEY OPPOSED 3379 ONLY BECAUSE THAT WAS THE PRICE OF
U.S. SUPPORT OF THE DRAFT DECLARATION.

16. A KEY ELEMENT IN AVOIDING MAJOR DEBATE ON 3379
HINGED ON DEPARTMENT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE COMPROMISE BY
WHICH DG WILL MENTION AREAS THAT ELUDED CONSENSUS WHEN
HE REPORTS TO THE CONFERENCE. HAD WE NOT AGREED TO
THIS COMPROMISE, WE WOULD HAVE FORCED A DEBATE, AND
WE WOULD HAVE ALIENATED THE AFRICANS BY ENDANGERING,
PERHAPS DESTROYING, CONSENSUS. WE DO NOT REGARD THE
COMPROMISE AS IN ANY WAY ENDANGERING OUR POSITION
GOING INTO THE NOVEMBER CONFERENCE. 3379 WOULD BE UP
FOR CONSIDERATION THEN WITH OR WITHOUT ANY
MENTION BY THE DG. THE ARABS CAN REINTRODUCE IT OUT
OF THE BLUE IF THEY WANT TO RISK AFRICAN WRATH. THEY
DO NOT DEPEND ON HAVING A MENTION OF IT IN THE DG'S
REPORT. MERE EXISTENCE OF "OTHER UN RESOLUTIONS ON
RACISM" IS ALL THE ARABS NEED AS BASIS FOR RAISING
3379 IN NOVEMBER.

17. USDEL WAS IN CLOSE AND CONSTANT CONTACT
WITH BOISSIER-PALUN.
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